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Questions of Cyprus

Human rights questions: implementation of human rights instruments; human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms

Letter dated 1 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 30 September 2002, addressed to you by Reşat Çağlar, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 54 and 109 (a) and (b).

(*Signed*) Ümit **Pamir**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 1 October 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 14 August 2002 (A/56/1028) addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative to the United Nations and to bring to your attention the following pertinent facts concerning the matter.

The slanderous and politically motivated accusations contained in the above-mentioned letter against the highest executive authority of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a cheap attempt at scoring points out of a legitimate court case. Such behaviour is highly unbecoming of an official dealing with the United Nations.

I would like to stress once again that the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is a full-fledged democracy which upholds the rule of law and the rules of democracy. A fair hearing was granted to the defendants in accordance with due process of law and respect to the court and the laws of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Attempts in certain circles to portray what is clearly a libel case as a restriction on the freedom of expression and of the press is totally incorrect and politically motivated.

I wish to take this opportunity to reiterate that the courts of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus are fully independent, as confirmed in several reports on human rights in "Cyprus" and, in this respect, are on a par with any independent judiciary found in all democratic countries. The latest annual report of the United States State Department on human rights (2001) provides testimony to this fact.

As would be the case in any other democratic country, fundamental freedoms are naturally subject to and constrained by the rule of law. What is expected of journalists in the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, as in other democratic States, is to act in line with the internationally accepted standards and ethics of journalism. It should be borne in mind that freedom of expression and of the press does not give anyone the right to publish "defamatory material" that cannot be proven in the courts of law. A crime is a crime and must be seen as such wherever it is committed.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 54 and 109 (a) and (b).

(*Signed*) Reşat **Çağlar**
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus